BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

ServiceBC
Ministry of Labour & Citizens' Services

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca | Issue: 06-13 | March 31, 2006

- **BC loses people to other provinces for the first time since 2003, with a net outflow of 869**
- **Restaurants and drinking places cash in with 12.5% increase in revenues in January**
- **British Columbians spent an average 20.7 hours per week watching TV in 2004**

Population

- **British Columbia's population stood at 4,279,462 on January 1st, as growth remained steady (+1.3%, year-over-year) during the fourth quarter of 2005.** International migration continued to swell the population, increasing 22.6% to 6,902. However, the net gain in migrants from all sources (6,033 people) was lacklustre compared to the first three quarters of 2005 as the province lost 869 people to other parts of Canada. This marked the first time since the second quarter of 2003 that BC has failed to attract more people from other provinces than it has lost to them.

  The turnaround in interprovincial migration isn't happening because Canadians have stopped coming to British Columbia. In fact, the province drew migrants from every region except Alberta. Ontario (1,069) was the biggest net donor.

  However, migrants from BC were attracted, together with other Canadians, by the magnetic force of Alberta's hot economy. There was a net inflow of 17,059 people to Alberta from across Canada at the end of last year. Every province lost more people to Alberta than it gained. BC's contribution was 3,079 people.

  Overall, the province's net outflow of 869 people in the fourth quarter was modest compared to what happened in the rest of the country. New Brunswick (-719) and PEI (-167), which have a much smaller population base, were the only provinces to lose fewer people.

  Data Source: BC Stats

- **Canada's population grew 1.0% during the twelve month period ending on January 1st, with Alberta well in advance of the rest of the pack, posting a staggering 2.5% gain.** BC (+1.3%) and Ontario (+1.1%) also saw stronger-than-average population growth.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Receipts of restaurants, caterers and taverns in British Columbia jumped 12.5% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January.** Both food services (+13.3%) and drinking places (+4.1%) made big gains. Nationally, receipts were up 6.7%.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **The number of regular Employment Insurance (EI) recipients in BC decreased 1.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) to 44,840 in January.** Nationally, there were 499,710 EI beneficiaries, up 1.2% from December 2005.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

Television Viewing

- **British Columbians watched an average of 20.7 hours of TV per week in the fall of 2004, about the same as the Canadian average (21.4).** Viewing tended to increase with age and women spent more time in front of the tube than men. Teens in BC reported viewing an average of only 11.7 hours per week, while children viewed 14.4 hours of television per week.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Viewers in British Columbia spent twice as much time watching foreign programmes as Canadian-made television in 2004.** Only 29% of their time was spent viewing Canadian-made programmes, compared to 71% spent on foreign programming. This is much lower than the national average of 37% for Canadian programmes, although that number is boosted by francophone viewers who watch mainly Canadian content (65%).

  Drama was the first choice for TV viewers in BC, representing about a quarter (26%) of all viewing time, followed closely by news and public affairs programmes, at 21%. Over half of all Canadian content viewed in BC consisted of news and public affairs. Sports were the next biggest draw for Canadian programming.

Report Visitor Entries in 2005

Did you know...
38% of Canadians list saving for retirement as their biggest financial priority

Across the country, fewer Canadians were watching sports programmes in 2004 compared to 2003 due primarily to the cancellation of the 2004/05 National Hockey League season. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Retirement

- **Analysts expect that the retirement of the baby-boom generation in Canada will prompt cultural and institutional changes.** The behaviour of female retirees in this generation is predicted to have a strong impact on existing retirement patterns in Canada.

The baby-boomer generation encompasses the first cohort of women to face retirement after having worked for most of their adult lives. Demonstrating the potential impact of women retirees is the changing contribution of wives to total household income. In 1980, for example, female partners contributed 20% of the household income, whereas by 2000 this number had risen to 35%. Also, in 2000 women contributed 40% or more of the household income in 43% of cases up from just 19% of cases in 1980.

The increased number of women with substantial pensions of their own will have a significant influence on retirement issues such as joint retirement, and living standards in retirement. Factors influencing an individual's decision to retire differ among men and women. In 2002, 12% of women claimed caring for a family member as the main deciding factor for retirement, whereas only 6% of men cited this reason. Women were also more likely than men to experience involuntary retirement.

As Canadians are living longer, added pressure is being placed on existing pension plans. According to the 2002 General Social Survey, nearly one-fifth of those surveyed said that they did not intend to retire at all, and many planned on delaying retirement or returning to work after retirement. Immigrants are particularly vulnerable in terms of retirement benefits: between 1980 and 2002 workplace pension income for older immigrants was 21% lower than for Canada's elderly population as a whole.

Data Source: SC, Catalogue 75-511-XPE

Student Loans

- **Of Canadian students who graduated in 1994-95, nearly 128,000 consolidated their student debt.** In 2003, nine years after consolidation, 30% of student debtors were still making payments, 39% had repaid their loans in full and 31% of student debt were in default (i.e., had been delinquent in payments for three or more months). Forty-seven percent of student debtors owed less than $5,000 at the time of consolidation, 31% owed between $5,000 and $9,999, 14% owed $10,000 to $14,999, 5% owed between $15,000 and $19,999, while 2% had debt of over $20,000. The size of debt incurred is not, however a major factor in the ability of student to repay their loans. Repayment ability depends primarily on future earnings, and future income is strongly related to the field and level of study while in school.

Data Source: SC, Catalogue #11F0019MIE, No. 275

The Nation

- **Canada's economy grew 0.2% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January, despite a slump (-0.5%) in the goods-producing industries, as mild weather kept the lid on the demand for fuel and electricity.** The utilities (-3.8%) and mining, oil & gas extraction (-2.6%) industries both posted declines. The service sector had a good month, expanding 0.5% on the strength of solid gains in most industries. Wholesale (+1.2%) and retail (+0.9%) trade were particularly robust. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Prices for Canadian manufactured goods were 0.6% higher in February compared to the same month of 2005.** Petroleum & coal (+14.5%) and chemicals (+4.9%) were the main causes of the overall inflation. Prices for BC softwood lumber continued to drop, falling to 9.4% below the February 2005 level. Both interior (-10.9%) and coastal (-5.2%) lumber producers received less for their product than they had a year earlier.

The cost of raw materials increased 10.6% in February. Prices for mineral fuels (+14.6%) were a factor in the large gains.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

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Infoline Report

Issue: 06-13
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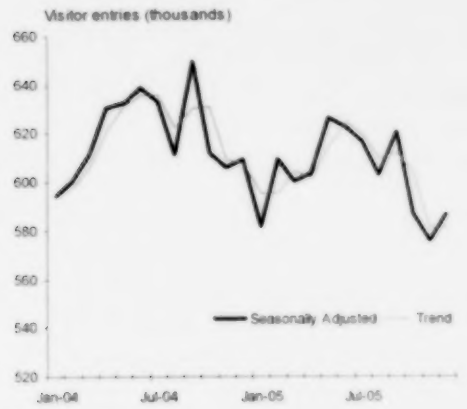
Contact: Ocean F. Lu (250) 387-0366
Originally published in *Tourism Sector Monitor*. Issue 06-02. Annual Subscription $60 +GST

Visitor Entries in 2005

A long-run downward trend in entries resumed in 2005, as the number of visitors declined for the fourth time since the turn of the century. After rebounding (+1.3%) in 2004, the number of travellers entering Canada via B.C. border crossings dropped 2.7% to about 7.2 million in 2005, the lowest number of visitor entries to B.C. since 1996. Although entries trended up in the first two quarters of 2005, they slumped in the second half of the year.

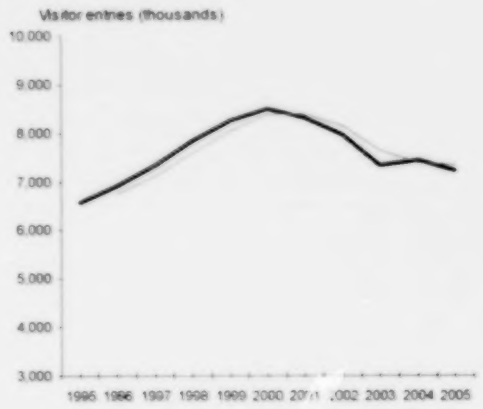
Visitor entries slump in second half of 2005



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Entries had increased in 2004, but that was partly due to a recovery (+1.3%) from a SARS-induced slump (-8.0%) in 2003.

Entries trending down



US entries continued to fall for the fifth consecutive year since 2000

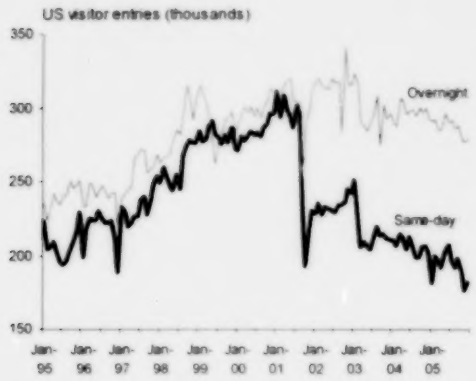
The US is a major tourism market, accounting for more than 80% of the total visitor entries through the province. Visits from the US have been declining since 2001, and continued to slump (-4.6%) in 2005 with same-day entries dropping 6.7% and overnight travel falling 3.4%.

The downturn in travel from the US since 2001 has primarily been due to fewer same-day trips. Over the last five years, the number of US same-day visits to B.C. has been declining. Tightened security, which has resulted in longer line-ups and delays at border crossings since September 2001, may have made same-day travel less appealing. In addition, a stronger Canadian currency has increased the cost of travel to B.C. from the US, which may be keeping some American visitors away from the province. Last year, the number of same-day trips (2.3 million) was at its lowest level since 1995.

In 2005, overnight travel from the US dropped to 3.4 million visitors, reaching the lowest level since 1999. Overnight travel from the States has also fallen off, but at a slower pace.

The events of 9/11 appear to have had a long-lasting and negative effect on same-day travel to B.C. from the US. Prior to 2001, the number of same-day trips was only slightly lower than the number of overnight visitors. Last year, there were 3 overnight visitors from the US for every 2 travellers taking same-day trips. The gap between overnight and same-day entries has become larger since the end of 2001, reaching its lowest level in 2005 (1.1 million).

A growing gap between the US same-day and overnight travel

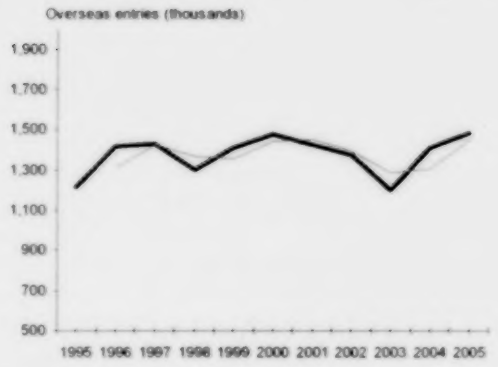


Data Source: Statistics Canada

Overseas travel to B.C. continued climb in 2005

Travel to B.C. from overseas markets (+5.6%) continued to climb in 2005, building on a substantial increase recorded in 2004 (+17.3%). The strong growth in 2004 was a result of recovery in Asian entries, which had plunged in 2003 due to the SARS scare. Entries started to trend up in December 2004 and continued to climb through the first two quarters of 2005. In mid-2005, entries from overseas weakened, but regained some of the lost ground at the end of the year.

Overseas visits continued to increase in 2005



Data Source: Statistics Canada

As the major overseas market for B.C., Asia accounts for about 50% of total overseas entries. The number of visits from Asia rose 1.1% in 2005 after increasing substantially in 2004 (+23.9%) as panic over SARS subsided. Entries from South Korea, the second largest Asian market, were up (+3.4%), but residents of Japan (-1.0%), Hong Kong (-2.2%) and Taiwan (-7.5%) paid fewer visits to B.C.

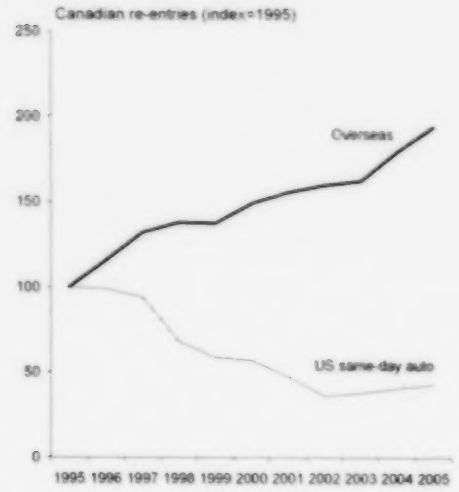
European visits continued to grow (+7.8%) to 494,000 in 2005, the highest level since 2001 as entries from the UK increased (+7.8%) for a fourth consecutive year. B.C. also welcomed 157,000 visitors from Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, and other parts of South Pacific). This was 8.9% more than in 2004, and represents the third year of solid gains in entries from this region.

More Canadians returning home from overseas travels

The number of Canadians re-entering the country via B.C. advanced (+6.2%) in 2005 for the third year in a row. Travel to overseas destinations has had a very positive trend over the last decade, with the exception of 1999 (-0.1%). Overseas returns almost doubled between 1995 and 2005 with the number of entries rising 8.2% to over 1.1 million travellers in 2005.

Same-day car trips from Canada to US had declined during most of the last decade, but began to grow steadily in 2003. In 2005, same-day cross-border excursions rose 5.4%, as Canadian tourists and shoppers continued to take advantage of a stronger dollar.

Canadian re-entries from overseas nearly doubled between 1995 and 2005



Data Source: Statistics Canada

Traveller Entries to Canada via BC (000s)

Period	International								Canadian		
	Total	USA			Overseas				Total	US same-day auto	Overseas
		Total	Same-day	Overnight	Total	Asia	Europe	Oceania*			
1995	6,577	5,369	2,488	2,880	1,209	646	419	110	13,502	9,885	581
1996	6,907	5,494	2,612	2,883	1,412	778	468	116	13,710	9,802	671
1997	7,323	5,893	2,798	3,094	1,430	798	449	122	13,428	9,329	767
1998	7,845	6,549	3,124	3,425	1,296	653	449	118	10,451	6,735	800
1999	8,269	6,862	3,370	3,492	1,408	716	485	126	9,588	5,813	799
2000	8,482	7,006	3,407	3,599	1,476	759	498	134	9,435	5,639	866
2001	8,313	6,895	3,258	3,637	1,418	732	466	132	8,329	4,720	903
2002	7,971	6,596	2,808	3,788	1,375	764	412	118	7,197	3,587	928
2003	7,335	6,137	2,581	3,557	1,198	578	410	125	7,285	3,744	942
2004	7,428	6,022	2,478	3,562	1,405	716	458	144	7,852	4,034	1,043
2005	7,231	5,747	2,311	3,440	1,484	724	494	157	8,342	4,250	1,128
	Percentage Change										
1995	9.6	6.6	3.4	9.5	25.5	39.9	11.7	28.3	-0.4	-1.1	5.1
1996	5.0	2.3	5.0	0.1	16.8	20.4	11.6	5.9	1.5	-0.8	15.4
1997	6.0	7.2	7.1	7.3	1.3	2.5	-3.9	4.9	-2.1	-4.8	14.4
1998	7.1	11.1	11.7	10.7	-9.4	-18.2	0.1	-3.1	-22.2	-27.8	4.2
1999	5.4	4.8	7.9	2.0	8.6	9.7	7.8	6.6	-8.3	-13.7	-0.1
2000	2.6	2.1	1.1	3.1	4.8	6.0	2.8	6.2	-1.6	-3.0	8.5
2001	-2.0	-1.6	-4.4	1.1	-3.9	-3.6	-6.4	-1.4	-11.7	-16.3	4.2
2002	-4.1	-4.3	-13.8	4.2	-3.0	4.4	-11.7	-10.5	-13.6	-24.0	2.7
2003	-8.0	-7.0	-8.1	-6.1	-12.9	-24.4	-0.4	5.8	1.2	4.4	1.5
2004	1.3	-1.9	-4.0	0.1	17.3	23.9	11.7	15.6	7.8	7.7	10.7
2005	-2.7	-4.6	-6.7	-3.4	5.6	1.1	7.8	8.9	6.2	5.4	8.2

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March 31, 2006
Issue 06-13

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/05	% change on one year ago
BC	4,279.5	1.3
Canada	32,422.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2004	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	157,241	7.7
GDP *($ 1997 millions)*	139,205	4.0
GDP *($ 1997 per Capita)*	33,129	2.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	20,182	1.4
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jan	3,779	-0.5
Merchandise Exports - Jan	3,121	-2.7
Retail Sales - Jan	4,339	2.4
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		12-month avg
(all items - 1992=100)	Feb '06	% change
BC	125.8	1.9
Canada	128.6	2.3
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '06	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,285	0.0
Employed - BC	2,176	0.4
Unemployed - BC	109	-7.1
		Jan '06
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	4.8	5.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.4	6.6
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 29/06	Mar 30/05
Prime Business Rate	5.50	4.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.05	5.05
- 5 year	6.45	6.25
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 29/06	Mar 30/05
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.1724	1.2165
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.8533	0.8217
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Feb '06	one year ago
BC	716.86	1.7
Canada	715.74	3.3

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

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- Business Indicators, March 2006
- Current Statistics, March 2006

Next week

- Small Business Quarterly, Fourth Quarter 2005

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